

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, BENC, MU, GW
SUBJECT: GERMAN ECONOMIC DELEGATION VISITS OMAN

1. A GERMAN ECONOMIC AND TRADE DELEGATION HEADED BY FORMER ECONOMICS MINISTER HANS FRIDERICH AND STATE SECRETARY ROHWEDDER OF THE ECONOMICS MINISTRY VISITED OMAN OCTOBER 12-15. THE DELEGATION INCLUDED MEMBERS OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT, BANKERS, AND BUSINESSMEN. A DRAFT AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED ON PROTECTION OF GERMAN INVESTMENT IN OMAN ALONG THE LINES OF OPIC. THE DELEGATION ALSO DISCUSSED WAYS OF BOOSTING ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

2. THE MOST IMMEDIATE GERMAN INTEREST IN OMAN IS THE PETROLEUM AND MINERALS SECTOR. THE DELEGATION ARRIVED A DAY AFTER THE OMAN GOVERNMENT SIGNED AN OIL CONCESSION AGREEMENT IN DHOFAR WITH A CONSORTIUM INCLUDING DEMINEX (FRG)

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AGIP (ITALY) AND BRITISH PETROLEUM. THE CONSORTIUM IS OBLIGATED TO SPEND ABOUT \$40 MILLION IN EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FOR THE 64,000 SQUARE MILE SOUTHERN CONCESSION. THE FRG IS ALSO INTERESTED IN FOLLOWING A PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF MINERALS IN DHOFAR AND NORTHERN OMAN MADE IN EARLY 1977. REPRESENTATIVES OF A PRIVATE MINERALS FIRM, METALLGESELLSCHAFT, DISCUSSED PARTICIPATION IN COPPER AND

CHROMITE MINING WITH THE OMANIS. KORFF REPRESENTATIVES HAD INTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT A PLANNED STEEL ROLLING MILL WITH THE OMANIS, A CONTRACT WHICH THE GERMANS HAVE A VERY GOOD CHANCE OF WINNING.

3. GERMAN FIRMS ARE ALSO INTERESTED IN EXPANDING THEIR ROLE IN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT. HOCHTIEF, WHICH IS CURRENTLY INCREASING THE SIZE OF THE RAYSUT PORT IN SALALAH, HAS PROMISED TO CONSTRUCT AN OIL PIER AT RAYSUT WHICH WILL HANDLE HEAVY OIL TO BE TRANSPORTED BY PIPELINE FROM THE AMAL AND MARMUL OIL FIELDS IN DHOFAR. STRABAG IS SEEKING MORE ROAD CONTRACTS AFTER SEVERAL SUCCESSFUL JOBS IN NORTHERN OMAN.

4. COMMENT: GERMAN FIRMS HAVE A WELL-DESERVED REPUTATION FOR DOING TIMELY AND GOOD QUALITY WORK. STRABAG AND HOCHTIEF IN PARTICULAR AVOID COST OVERRUNS AND COMPLETE PROJECTS ON OR AHEAD OF SCHEDULE. GERMAN EXPECTATIONS OF WINNING SOME MAJOR PROJECTS ARE HIGH; THE BRITISH EMBASSY IS NERVOUS THAT THE OMANGOV'S VIP TREATMENT OF THE DELEGATION SIGNIFIES THAT GERMAN FIRMS MAY START CUTTING INTO AREAS HITHERTO CONSIDERED BRITISH PRESERVES.
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